

Health Services Professional Advisory Committee

Professional Core Compentencies Toolkit

Executive Skill Building Program

Part 1 of 4



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Introduction and Purpose

The Commissioned Corps has a long history and culture of progressive professional development, a key component of excellence in officership and leadership. As a commissioned officer and public health professional, it is very important to establish and maintain a strategic plan for your career that supports continuous growth and advancement. The path to executive leadership requires a progressive and sequential series of carefully planned training, education, and experiential learning. As an officer, laying the groundwork begins the moment you are called to active duty.

The Health Services Professional Advisory Committee (HSPAC) Professional Core Competencies Program is a skill-building, career development activity designed to prepare the next generation of federal executive leaders in public health through the creation of a customized Career Development Plan. While there are many tools available to help you develop and manage your career, this program offers a unique and targeted approach by taking the guesswork out of planning and provides a "how-to" guide captured in this toolkit. You will gain and hone the professional skills necessary for operational leadership starting from any point in your career. Leadership, for the purposes of this program, is defined as the action of leading an activity, program, personnel, facility, or organization.

Seven professional core competencies provide the framework for the program. Each competency is affiliated with a set of professional skills and areas of knowledge designed to help you achieve proficiency in that specific competency. Of note is the seventh competency, leadership, one of the most important tenets of officership. Officers are strongly encouraged to include leadership as a constant action item in their career development plan. This program includes resources, such as the HSPAC Leadership Academy, to help direct your development. If you already have an existing career development plan, the design of this program makes it easy to use in conjunction with other tools and resources or you may simply use it as your sole planning tool.

Operational Leadership



Strategic Leadership

- Ensures organizational processes are effectively carried out on a day-to-day basis
- Monitors performance
- Addresses constraints/issues
- Ensures employees understand what is to be done and are provided with the authority, knowledge, and skills to do it
- Defines the overall vision and mission of an organization
- Develops strategies, systems and structures to achieve the vision and mission
- Creates both technical and social systems that are effectively integrated, and address the needs of both customers and employees

Please Note

Executive Leadership Development prepares you to take the helm — to analyze critically, lead confidently, and articulate strategically.



What are Professional Core Competencies?

The professional core competencies represent **seven key functional areas** that govern the administration and execution of many federal organizations and programs. Each competency is further described by many distinct set of professional skills and areas of knowledge (hereafter collectively referred to as "skills") agreed upon by leaders in public health across the federal government. As a current or rising public health executive, you will be responsible for leading and directing these business processes to ensure the successful execution and management of federal programs, services, and initiatives.

Proficiency, in the context of this program, is defined as the increasing ability to independently and effectively lead processes, activities, programs, people, facilities, or an organization while ultimately demonstrating mastery of a competency.

The seven competencies are:



Each competency includes a set of professional skills that support the management and execution of government operations (see Professional Core Competencies Skills Inventory).



Professional Core Competencies: Skills Inventory

Core Competency	Key Components		Expert Resources
Policy	Federal Regulation Process	Administrative Procedures (Notice of Proposed Rule Making Process)	Office of Regulation, Policy and
	Federal Budget Process (Congressional Reports and Records, Committee Reports)	Legislative Research	Management Office of Policy
	 Federal Legislative Process (Authorizations and Appropriations) 	Development/Formulation and Execution	Office of Legislation Office of Evaluation
	Appropriations Law		and Analysis
Human Resources	Federal Hiring Process	Creating/Coaching/Managing IDPs	Office of Human Resources
	Supervising civilians, contractors, and cc officers	Training (development and implementation)	Office of Ethics and Integrity
	Conflict Resolution	Time Management	
	Labor and Employee Relations (scope and process)	Employee Assistance Programs	
	Bargaining Unit Guidelines	Creating a culture of wellness	
	Effective Communication	Rights of a Supervisor	
	Coaching, mentoring and motivating staff	Rights of Employees	
	Performance Management		
Resource and Financial Management	Federal Budget Process	Managing program budgets and reporting	Office of Budget and Finance
	Federal Budget Terminology	Agency Resource (Budget) Planning Process	Office of Funding Program Affairs
	Agency Budget Process	Operational Plans	
Grants and Contracts	Life Cycle of Federal Grants	Contract Negotiation	Office of Acquisitions and Grants Services
	Cost principles	Selecting the correct funding instrument: contracts, grants and cooperative agreements	Office of Federal Financial Assistance
	Life Cycle of Federal Contracts		Office of Grants management



Professional Core Competencies: Skills Inventory

Core Competency	Key Components		Expert Resources
Organizational Management	 Project Management – managing the lifecycle of funded activities 	Developing and tracking project budgets	Data Mining Systems and
	 Portfolio Management – managing the lifecycle of multiple projects 	Executing priorities	Evaluation Teams Office of Regulation
	Process Improvement (i.e. Lean Thinking)	A-123 audit process	Editorial
	Organizational Assessments	A-19 process	Office of Legislation Office of
	Enterprise Risk Management	IT systems and Functionality Development	Information
	Standard Operating Procedures	GAO and OIG Inquiries	Technology
	Federal Records Management	Evaluation Techniques	Office of Integrity and Performance Review
	Workflow Management	Data Collection and Utilization	Office of Data and
	Population (Health) Management	Data Analysis	Analytics, and
	OMB Clearance Process	Data Visualization	Evaluation Office of
	Business Intelligence and Analytics	Quality Assurance	Performance
	Document Clearance Process	 Memorandum of Agreement/Understanding (MOA/ MOU) 	Management Office of Policy
	Organizational Development	Interagency Agreements (IAA)	
	Implementation Science		
Communication	Change Management	 Responding to Congressional Inquiries and Correspondence 	Office of External Affairs
	Internal and External Communication Methods	• Principles & Platforms for Training Development and Presentation	Office of Media Affairs
	Federal Plain Language	• 508 Compliance	Office of
	Effective Communication	Social and Earned Media	Communication, Outreach and
	Writing (Professional, Technical, Creative)	Engaging Stakeholders	Development
Leadership	Leadership Core Competencies	Operational Leadership	Agency Mentoring
	Leadership vs Management vs Supervision	Strategic Leadership	Program HSPAC Mentoring
	Understanding your strengths and weaknesses	Emotional Intelligence	Program
	Discovering and Honing your Leadership Style	Self-care and Wellness	HSPAC Leadership Academy
	Characteristics of great leaders	Political Savvy	Office of Human
	Leading Cross Functional Teams	Change Management and Leading Change	Resources
	Engaging Stakeholders	Leading People	Office of Talent
	Situational Leadership	 Developing, Communicating and Implementing a Vision 	Management

What is in the Program Toolkit?



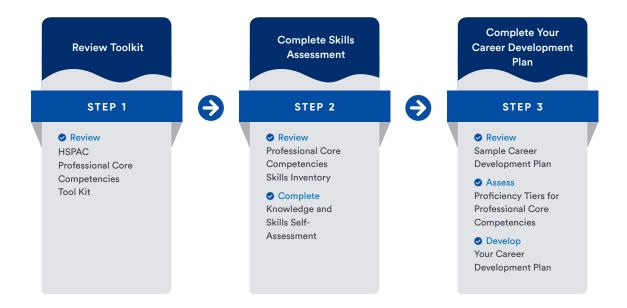
This Toolkit contains

- A Knowledge and Skills Self-Assessment
- Resources for each Professional Core Competency Skill
- Sample Career Development Plan
- ✓ Your Career Development Plan Template
- ✓ A Guide to the Proficiency Tiers for the Professional Core Competencies



How Does the Program Work?

The Professional Core Competencies Program consists of three steps: review the toolkit and **Professional Core Competencies Program Skills Inventory** to gain a better understanding of the program and competencies. Next, complete the **Knowledge and Skills Self-Assessment**. For the last step, create your **Career Development Plan**.



How Long does it take to Complete the Program?

Career development plans are continuous, dynamic, and filled with opportunities for life-long learning. This program is no exception. As an executive and leader, professional development is an ongoing process that changes and evolves as your career matures.

Do I Have to be a Senior Officer to Participate in the Program?

This is not a mandatory program and is for officers at any rank. You can lead from wherever you are: as a staff member, Branch or Section Chief, or even a Division or Center Director. The program allows you to garner the skills necessary to lead from each position.



Who Can Participate in the Program?

Although originally intended for commissioned officers, the toolkit can, most certainly, be used by all federal public health professionals. For officers, the program is designed for use at any rank and at any point and time in your career.

How do I Determine My Level of Proficiency?

There are **four** progressive proficiency tiers that indicate levels of knowledge and experience for each competency:



Tier 0 - No knowledge or experience.



Tier 1 - Limited knowledge and experience; use skills as a participating member of a team.



Tier 2 - Utilizes knowledge and experience to conduct or manage an activity with assistance from team members and/or others.



Tier 3 - Independently demonstrates excellence or expertise in a competency; leads projects or initiatives on behalf of program/agency/organization.

Your Career Development Plan will be ongoing and dynamic. As such, you may experience uneven levels of proficiency for each competency throughout your career. Your plan will be unique to you and with expert advice and guidance, follow and manage your plan in a manner that makes sense and best benefits your career (see Proficiency Tiers for Professional Core Competencies).





Get Started!

This section contains detailed instructions and helpful tips to guide you through the creation of your career development plan. The cornerstone of achieving success in this program is to seek out and maximize the input and guidance from others who are committed to your success as a public health professional and leader. You will need to clearly communicate the purpose of the program and be precise about how they can help you obtain your goals.



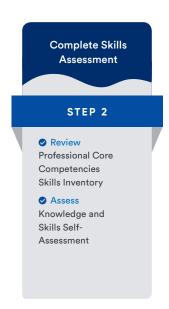
Review the Toolkit and Understand How the Program Works

Read the toolkit from cover to cover and become familiar with the skills associated with each competency. The skills listed in the **Professional Core Competencies Skills Inventory** were created based on the feedback and consensus of leaders and experts across the government. If you identify additional skills for a competency, please add them to your inventory.

NOTES:			







Step 2 Complete the Skills Assessment

There are several key action steps in this section. After you review the toolkit, **the following components can occur either sequentially or simultaneously**. There is no right or wrong order for the steps necessary to complete your CDP.

- A. Review the Professional Core Competencies Skills Inventory
- B. Complete the Knowledge and Skills Self Assessment

Complete documenting your current skills for each competency and determine your proficiency tier (see Proficiency Tiers for Core Competencies).

B.1. Develop an Engagement Strategy

As you begin to think about your current and prospective professional skills, begin engaging technical and organizational management experts and supervisors to help you **identify gaps and determine new and relevant skills to add to your Career Development Plan (CDP)**.

B.1.1. Technical and Organizational Experts

Through conversations and interviews with experts and managers, you will uncover new skills and opportunities for training and growth as well as broaden your thinking and ability to be strategic in managing your career. In addition, conversations will allow you to gain a more practical understanding of how organizations are managed and how the skills identified in the Professional Core Competencies Skills Inventory are operationalized. For the purposes of this program, **two types of experts** have been identified. The technical or subject matter expert will have an extensive knowledge and experience in an area such as global health, emergency preparedness and response, vector borne diseases, HIV/AIDS, or water quality. An organizational expert will be well versed in business processes. Examples include grants

Technical Experts – Experts with specialized areas of knowledge such as a Budget Analyst, Instructional Designer, Human Resources Specialist, etc. **Organizational Experts** – Professionals with expertise in managing an organization such as a Policy Director or Chief Technology Officer.





administration, audits, or stakeholder engagement. Typically, this type of expert is a manager or is responsible for leading specific effort(s) on behalf of an organization. It is possible for an expert to be both a technical and organizational expert such as a Policy or Human Resources Director.

The **Expert Resources** column in **Professional Core Competencies Skills Inventory** is there to help you figure out where you may locate experts in your agency and other organizations.

B.1.2. Supervisors and Mentors

Your supervisor will be one of the most important investors in your professional development. Discussions with your supervisor and mentor provides an opportunity to share and gain support for your development plan. In addition, your supervisor will be able to help you identify specific skills that will align and directly support the work of your organization.

Mentors play a significant role in professional development and many executives have more than one mentor and benefit from the access to a broad and diverse array of skills and expertise. In addition, mentors will help you manage the development and implementation of your CDP.

The HSPAC has a robust mentoring program that will pair you with an officer based on factors such as agency, duty station location, and practice discipline. If you are looking for a mentor, please visit the HSPAC website https://mentordb.usphs-hso.org/welcome.php to sign up for the program.

Planning in Action: A Case Study

LCDR Jones is a clinician and began his career eight years ago at the BOP and is currently stationed at ACF as a Public Health Analyst. His first assignment, after leaving the BOP, was at an office in the FDA that developed and provided training for staff to enhance their ability to analyze and report on complex data and information. As CDR Jones began filling out his **Knowledge and Skills Assessment Form**, he scheduled a meeting with the Instructional Designer (ID) from the training office to help him think through and document the skills he gained in his previous position. The ID suggested that he enhance his knowledge of instructional design and implementation by taking a course on adult styles of learning and hone his ability to utilize Learning Management Systems. CDR Jones' supervisor supported the addition of these skills to his CDP and tasked CDR Jones with leading the training efforts in his current organization after he completed his training.





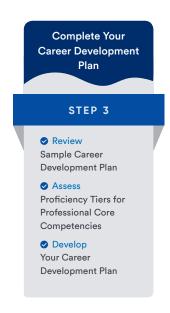
Meeting Preparation and Interview Tips

- Interviews and consultation with experts, supervisors, and mentors can be done in sequence or simultaneously while you complete your Knowledge and Skills Self-Assessment and as you create your Career Development Plan.
- Send the toolkit and your draft CDP in advance of your meeting.
- Interviewing Managers: Many federal functions and activities occur in relation to the fiscal year. During your conversation with managers, ask them to provide an overview of their role and responsibilities during the fiscal year as an executive manager. Be sure to meet with managers at various levels in an organization to better understand their role, responsibilities, and skills.
- During your meetings:
 - Provide an overview of the program.
 - Review your Knowledge and Skills Self-Assessment including any feedback you may have received from experts and supervisors.
 - Discuss your current skills and those you are considering for inclusion in your 12 to 18-month Career Development Plan.

NOTES:			







Step 3 Complete Your Career Development Plan

- After you complete your self-assessment and initial conversations with experts, mentors, and your supervisor, determine and finalize the 2 to 3 skills, new and/or current, that will be the focus of your 12 to 18-month career development plan.
- Revisit your plan every 4 to 6 months with your supervisor and mentor(s).

How Can I Maximize the use of my Career Development Plan (CDP)?

The CDP serves as a living document that you will refer back to and revise throughout your career as you obtain new areas of expertise and levels of proficiency. In addition, there are a few other uses that you may find helpful.

- Establish your "professional brand." Your brand is your own unique combination of skills and experiences that allows you to promote your value to an organization and distinguishes you from your colleagues. Continuous conversations about your CDP with your supervisor, mentors and others will keep them abreast of your knowledge and capabilities and encourage them to look for and assign new duties and responsibilities.
- Use your CDP to update and enhance your Category and Job Applicant Curriculum
 Vitae (CV). Incorporate the skills in the description of your duties and responsibilities as well
 as your accomplishments and impact. Be sure to update the Skills Summary and Training
 sections in your CVs.
- Improve Your Interviewing Skills. Clear communication is an important strategy for effective interviewing. Most interviewers will ask questions about your skills. A review of your CDP will help you communicate, in a clear and concise manner, your knowledge, skills and experience. Use the STAR method to describe the Situation, Task (your charge), Action (what was your role and what did you do), and the Result. Be sure to focus on you, not the project!



Sample Career Development Plan (CDP)

The Career Development Plan contains three sections: the Knowledge and Skills Self-Assessment, a Notes area for you document key points from your Interviews with Experts, Supervisors, and Mentors, and a section for you to document the skills and plan of action for the next 12 to 18-month.

• List your existing skills for each competency and determine your proficiency tier (see Professional Core Competencies Skills Inventory and the Proficiency Tiers for Professional Core Competencies).

Section I: Knowledge and Skills Self-Assessment

Position Title	Dates	Current Skill Sets	Corresponding Core Competencies	Proficiency Tier
Project Manager	2015- present	Data Evaluation Data analysis Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)	Organizational Management	Tier 1
		Presentation Delivery	Communication	Tier 2
Public Health Analyst	2010 - 2015	Grants monitoring and close out	Grants & Contracting	Tier 3
Dental Hygienist	2008-2010	Quality Improvement	Organizational Management	Tier 1

Section II: Interview Notes from Experts, Supervisors and Mentors

Dates	Experts, Supervisors, Mentors	Notes
1/2/2019	Ron Johnson – FDA, Office of Policy and Data	Given my current position, Ron suggested that I enhance current and previous skills in data and focus on policy in 2020-2021. Need to increase my knowledge of data visualization. Given clinical background, need to increase my data and evaluation skills by becoming familiar with the concepts in population health management.
1/15/2019	Nancy Davis – CMS, Office of Contracts and Acquisitions	Focus on becoming a COR in order to understand process and assume more projects and responsibilities. Need to understand the contracts process from end to end.
2/4/2019	Calvin Adams - Dean of Jefferson College of Population Health	Discussed how I can apply principles and concepts from the program to my current position and projects. Will register for upcoming semester. Schedule check-in meeting in October.

Section III: Skills and Action Plan

Date Started	Skills	Corresponding Core Competency	Goal and Action(s)	Name of Training/Activity	Supervisory Approval (Yes/No)	Date of Completion
2/28/2019	Contracts	Grants & Contracting	Become familiar with process to become a COR. Complete at least half of the required trainings by September 2019.	 Intro to Grants – Pre-Award Intro to-Grants – Post Award Monitoring Detecting and Preventing Fraud Appropriations law 	Yes or No	Date here
9/03/2019	Population Health Management	Organizational management	Obtain graduate certificate in Population Health Management from Thomas Jefferson University by March 2020.	Certification	Yes or No	Date here
6/06/2020	Data Visualization	Organizational management	Complete course on data visualization in November 2019. Talk to supervisor about developing a project to use skills after training.	Online course- Data Visualization using Tableau on Coursera	Yes or No	Date here



Template Career Development Plan (CDP)

The Career Development Plan contains three sections: the Knowledge and Skills Self-Assessment, a Notes area for you document key points from your Interviews with Experts, Supervisors, and Mentors, and a section for you to document the skills and plan of action for the next 12 to 18-month.

• List your existing skills for each competency and determine your proficiency tier (see Professional Core Competencies Skills Inventory and the Proficiency Tiers for Professional Core Competencies).

Section 1: Knowledge and Skills Self-Assessment

Position Title	Dates	Current Skill Sets	Corresponding Core Competencies	Proficiency Tier
Your position	20xx- present	Your skills here Your skills here Your skills here	Your Core Competency	Tier x
		Your skill here	Your Core Competency	Tier x
Your position	Start - End	Your skills here	Your Core Competency	Tier x
Your position	Start - End	Your skills here	Your Core Competency	Tier x

Section 2: Interview Notes from Experts, Supervisors and Mentors

Dates	Experts, Supervisors, Mentors	Notes
Date here	Place name here	Your notes here
Date here	Place name here	Your notes here
Date here	Place name here	Your notes here

Section 3: Skills and Action Plan

Date Started	Skills	Corresponding Core Competency	Goal and Action(s)	Name of Training/Activity	Supervisory Approval (Yes/No)	Date of Completion
Date here	Your skills	Your Core Competency	Goals and actions goes here	 Training / Activity here Training / Activity here Training / Activity here Training / Activity here 	Yes or No	Date here
Date here	Your skills	Your Core Competency	Goals and actions goes here	Training / Activity	Yes or No	Date here
Date here	Your skills	Your Core Competency	Goals and actions goes here	Training / Activity	Yes or No	Date here



Proficiency Tiers for Professional Core Competencies

Policy Development

Tier 0	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
No know- ledge or experience needed	Researches, learns and understands policies and procedures Authors, communicates and implements policies and procedures	 Authors, communicates and implements policies and procedures Researches, learns and understands policies and procedures at the state, departmental, national, multinational, and/or international level. 	 Authors, communicates and implements policies and procedures at the departmental, national, multinational, or international level; Participates in policy development processes Is recognized as a subject matter expert on policies at the departmental, national, multinational or international level.

Human Resources	
 Researches, learns and can apply the rules, regulations and guidelines for supervising civil service, active duty, and contract employees; Researches, learns and can apply the qualities most associated with successful supervisors; Researches, learns and can apply the qualities most associated with successful supervisors; Researches, learns and can apply basic human resource management principles, such as motivation, effective communication of objectives and effective feedback; Researches, learns and can apply a wide variety of different supervisory techniques and the situations where those techniques may be appropriate; May oversee and supervise an office or duty station with a small number of employees (typically less than 5 employees). Communicates and displays appropriate supervisor; Communicates and displays the qualities most associated with successful supervisors; Researches, learns and can apply settings, such as relationship building and dispute and conflict resolution; Demonstrates proficiency in utilizing advanced human resource management principles for larger groups, such as organizational motivation and the collaboration of organizational units towards objectives; Oversees a program, office, or branch with a moderate number of employees (typically less than 5 employees). 	 Communicates and implements human resource principles which align with the organization's strategic goals; Demonstrates the ability to mentor new supervisors in human resource management skills and techniques; Serves as a direct or indirect mentor to junior USPHS officers, as well as other federal employees, on a wide variety of supervisory topics and techniques; Oversees a larger program, division or agency with a large number of employees (typically more than 20 employees).

⊘ Resource and Financial Management

	Researches, learns and understands	 Prepares, submits, and executes mid-level	 Prepares, submits, and executes
	budgeting process associated with	budgets (e.g. program office budgets, larger	large budgets (e.g. OPDIV/STAFFDIV
	accounts at the office or duty station level,	medical clinic budgets [DoD, VA, IHS, etc.],	budgets, state, regional, national or
	including applicable laws and regulations;	and division-level budgets);	international budgets);
No know- ledge or experience needed	 Prepares, submits, and executes a budget at the office or duty station level; Researches, learns and understands budgeting process associated with mid-level accounts (e.g. program office budgets, larger medical clinic budgets [DoD, VA, IHS, etc.], and division-level budgets), including applicable laws and regulations; Researches, learns and understands basic principles of resource management. 	 Researches, learns and understands more advanced principles of resource management; Researches, learns and understands budgeting process associated with large accounts (e.g. OPDIV/STAFFDIV budgets, state, regional, national or international budgets), including applicable laws and regulations. 	Participates in budgeting and resource management processes at highest level of United States government (White House, Congress, etc).



Proficiency Tiers for Professional Core Competencies

Grants and Contracting

Tier 0	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
No know- ledge or experience needed	 Learns and understands basic principles of federal contracting and grants; Writes and oversees smaller grants; Serves as a Level I HHS Federal Acquisition Certification - Contracting Officer Representative (FAC-COR) or agency equivalent for smaller contracts (value less than \$25,000); Learns and understands advanced principles of federal contracting and grants. 	Writes and oversees larger grants; Serves as a Level II HHS FAC-COR or agency equivalent for moderate to complex contracts (value greater than \$25,000 but less than \$10 million); Learns and understands expert level principles of contracting and/or grants.	 Writes and oversees very large grants programs; Serves as a Level III HHS FAC-COR or agency equivalent for complex contracts (value exceeds \$10 million); Serves as subject matter expert to department/agency on contracting and/or grants.

Organizational Management

▼ Organizational Management						
author and implement organizational management programs to achieve shortand long-term organizational objectives; Researches, learns and understands basic principles of program, project, and organizational management, process improvement, operations research and/or management science Researches, learns and understands basic principles of statistics, data analytics and data visualization; Researches, learns and understands basic principles of statistics, data analytics and data visualization; 1 to design, author and implement organizational management programs to achieve short- and long-term organizational objectives; Researches, learns and understands advanced principles of program, project and organizational management, process improvement, operations research and/or management science Researches, learns and understands advanced principles of statistics, data analytics and data visualization; Can effectively use statistical and analytical applications to perform basic analysis of a small data set;	 Utilizes advanced principles from Tier 2 to design, author and implement organizational management programs to achieve short- and long-term organizational objectives; Researches, learns and understands expert principles of program, project and organizational management, process improvement, operations research and/or management science Researches, learns and understands expert principles of statistics, data analytics and data visualization; Can effectively use statistical and analytical applications to perform advanced analysis of a large data set; If working in a clinical environment, researches, learns and understands expert principles of epidemiology, population health management and group practice management. 					

Communication

No knowledge or needed

- Researches, learns and understands basic principles of change management and Internal and external communication methods;
- Basic understanding of principles and platforms for presentations such as training development.
- Researches, learns and understands advanced principles of change management and Internal and external communication methods;
- Advanced understanding of principles and platforms for presentations such as training development.
- Researches, learns and understands expert principles of change management and Internal and external communication methods
- Can effectively use different principles and platforms for presentations such as training development.



Leadership Development

No knowledge or experience needed

- Observes and learns a variety of leadership styles and techniques;
- Serves as an official HS Category mentee.
- Exhibits an appropriate variety of leadership styles and techniques to peers, supervisors, subordinates and to the public:
- Serves as both an official HS Category mentor and a mentee.
- Teaches a variety of leadership styles and techniques, whether informally by example, or formally through the HS Category mentorship process;
- Serves as both an official HS Category mentor and a mentee;
- Provides HS Category leadership with feedback and engagement, as appropriate, to refine and shape the future of the HS Category mentorship program.

